

# THE GUARDIAN

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SEVEN

**THE PICTURE** below was taken at Fort Hunter Liggett. I was stationed there in 67/68 after returning from Vietnam. I know I love to tell this story but here it is for you who may not have heard

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**[www.madera-county.com](http://www.madera-county.com)** Go to “Select a Department” then scroll down to “Veterans”  
**At Veteran Resources find back copies**

the story.  
One fine day the Captain called me into his office and told me he had a special job for me if I wanted to do it. I said sure Captain and he told me he was going to give me some money and to buy some beer and soda and whatever and start a club at Hunter Lig-

gett. So off to the PX I went. By the time I “retired” from the Army I was turning in to the Captain \$1,000 per month. He had told me not to charge too much but just rounding my cost off I made that much money. The club did stop the soldiers from getting arrested in the local bars and clubs because they stayed on base. I almost stayed in the Army because of that job.



**RECONNAISSANCE** – U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Daniel Peat shows squad members the route they are taking on an upcoming reconnaissance patrol during a field exercise at Fort Hunter Liggett, Calif., July 27, 2006. The field exercise is designed to prepare small unit leaders with skills to better lead their troops. Defense Dept. photo by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Carmichael Yezpez



## Veterans Service Office

**Madera Veterans Office**  
321 W. Yosemite Ave.  
Madera Ca 93637  
Suite 101

### Hours

Mon., Through Fri. 8-5  
Dennis Blessing, Service Officer  
**(559) 675-7766**

**Madera Transportation**  
(888) 826-2838 ext 6424  
from Merced ( **72 Hr. Notice** )  
Oakhurst (559) 658-5399

WASHINGTON, May 19, 2006 – Military families are staying connected across the miles, thanks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars.



*VFW national headquarters staff members Alisa Nelson (left), Bud Haney (center) and Steve Crutcher prepare laptop computers for distribution to family support centers of deploying military units. Haney is director of the VFW's Military Assistance Program, which is administering the effort to facilitate contact between servicemembers and their loved ones at home. Courtesy photo (Click photo for screen-resolution image); [high-resolution image](#) available.*

So far, about 103 of 150 laptop computers the VFW's Military Assistance Program purchased are in the field, said program director Bud Haney. While most are in locations that are easily accessible and safe locations, some have gone overseas, he said. Some of those that were deployed are with soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division and the Connecticut National Guard.

All of the laptops are equipped with wireless technology, but also have high-speed DSL modems, he said. Other features include a Web camera and a DVD/compact disc player and writer.

"What we wanted to do was work with the Defense Department's video e-mail capabilities and let the families send video e-mails and messages back and forth," Haney said. He added the DoD's network is online, and families can register with the program to do

just that.

"This is all about trying to take some of the stress of communications problems (off) the families and the servicemembers," Bud Haney said. "The whole initiative of the MAP program is to service families out there (and) to help them get through the rough spots of the deployments and help them after they get back."

MAP will rotate the laptops between units as one returns and another deploys, he said. The number of computers sent to any one location depends on the number of people being served, he added.

The VFW has authorized purchase up to 400 of the computers with money from its MAP fund. That fund relies on unsolicited donations, and is earmarked to help servicemembers and their families, Haney said. It also allows the VFW to continue its phone card program, which has distributed more than 7 million phone cards to deploying servicemembers since 1999, when the MAP program was started. Last year alone, more than 1.5 million phone cards were distributed, Haney said.

The VFW also is footing the bill for voice over Internet calls from 191 phone and Internet cafes at select locations throughout Iraq as part of Operation Uplink. The gesture helped deployed troops connect with loved ones on Mother's Day, and the VFW is tentatively planning on repeating the program for Father's Day.

"We're here to support the men and women of the armed forces and their families," he said. "If they need any help, (they shouldn't) be afraid to call the local VFW or the VFW national headquarters, because that's what we're here for."

**The Guardian is published monthly by Dennis Blessing, Service Officer of the Madera County Veterans Service Office. It is freely issued, via email, to all Madera Veterans and Service Organizations.**

**The primary purpose of this publication is to provide County Veterans with a timely news source; effectively informing veterans of VA up-dates and other pertinent information. Hopefully, it will also serve as an inter-group vehicle, announcing important activities and information offered by other local service organizations.**

**Your comments and suggestions are always welcomed.**

*Dennis Blessing, Publisher*

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# THE REP REPORT



## SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION

Service Connected Disability Compensation is a benefit awarded to veterans who had an injury &/or disease that was incurred &/or aggravated during a veterans military service.

- I. Service Connection- relationship of a particular disabling condition to veterans service.
  - A. Incurred- may have been directly caused or result of incident in service.
    1. Example-incurred combat wound &/or cancer due to asbestos exposure.
  - B. Aggravated- preexisting disability that gets worse during service.
  - C. Presumption- veteran presumed to be in sound condition at time of service entry.
    1. exception-condition noted upon entrance examination.
  - D. Time Limit- no minimum time limit to establish service connection.
- II. Disability Compensation-monthly payment benefit payable for service connected disabilities.
  - A. Not income based.
  - B. Determined by the level of impairment of disability.
  - C. Eleven Levels- 0% thru 100%.
  - D. Average Impairment of Earning Capacity-major factor in determining rating.
  - E. Age not a factor.
  - F. Bilateral Factor- applied to disabilities that effect paired extremities.
    1. Example: both arms &/or both legs.
- III. Direct Service Connection- based on either incurrence or aggravation.
  - A. 38 CFR 3.309(a) lists defined chronic conditions.
    1. time limits to apply listed in 38 CFR 3.309.
  - B. Are by nature permanent.
    1. examples: surgical scars & amputations.
  - C. Continuity & Chronicity.
    1. established by repeat episodes of condition.
  - D. Medical evidence/professional opinion linking condition & service.
- IV. Secondary Service Connection- established for new conditions caused by service connected conditions.
  - A. Side effects of service connected conditions.
  - B. Complications of service connected conditions; 38 CFR 3.310(a).



**Jesus S. Lopez**

**Madera County Veteran  
Service Representative  
(559) 675-7766  
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Madera Ca 93637**



# FROM THE FRONT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
DEFENSE



A nuclear-capable MiG-29C is readied for air shipment from Moldova to the United States on Oct. 16, 1997. The Department of Defense of the United States of America and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Moldova recently reached an agreement to implement the Cooperative Threat Reduction accord signed on June 23, 1997, in Moldova. This agreement authorized the United States Government to purchase nuclear-capable MiG-29 fighter planes from the Government of Moldova. This is a joint effort by both governments to ensure that these dual-use military weapons do not fall in to the hands of rogue states. DoD photo.



AMERICAN FORCES INFORMATION SERVICE

## NEWS ARTICLES

### “That’s why we wear them”

Story and photo by Staff Sgt. Jim Goodwin  
Regimental Combat Team 7

**CAMP AL ASAD** — Though a religious man, Cpl. Brian M. Henner doesn’t attribute divine intervention, luck, fate or destiny to the fact that he’s still alive after taking an enemy bullet to the head.

Instead, the 22-year-old U.S. Marine says it was his helmet that saved his life in the middle of a recent gunfight between Marines and insurgents in Iraq’s Al Anbar province.

“If I didn’t have it on, it probably would have went into the top of my head,” said Henner, a native of Rochester, N.Y. “It didn’t just graze, it dug in to the helmet, but that’s why we wear them.”

Henner, a Marine combat photographer with Regimental Combat Team 7, was shot in the helmet when insurgents, hidden in a near-by tree-line, fired upon Marines manning a vehicle inspection checkpoint July 23.

The incident took place in Haqlaniyah – one of three Euphrates River valley cities in the western portion of Al Anbar province which make up the Haditha Triad region.



Cpl. Brian M. Henner, a 22-year-old Marine from Rochester, N.Y., displays the helmet he wore July 23 when he was shot in the head by an insurgent.

While snapping photographs of Marines searching vehicles, Henner says the Marines received gunfire from a tree-line across the street. The Marines took cover





behind a car, but Henner was stuck in the road, where he was photographing, with just a small median to provide protection.

As insurgents continued to fire against the Marines, Henner laid on his belly behind the road's median and returned fire with his rifle before crawling along the median and away from the insurgents.

**He says he was shot when he was crawling away from the firing. The impact of the bullet took a chunk out of the top of his helmet.**

**"I saw a flash and then, 'Wham!' something hit me in the head real hard," said Henner, a 2002 graduate of Brookport High School in Rochester. "I knew it wasn't a rock, and I thought, 'Damn, I think I just got shot in the head.'"**

With other Marines yelling at him to "Move!" – Henner sprang to his feet, ran for the car, and slid across its hood – breaking his camera lens in the process.

He then used his personal camera to record short video clips of the ensuing gun battle, which lasted less than 30 minutes, he said.

"It wasn't just another patrol to hand out candy," he said. "I remember that whole 25 minutes pretty well."

**His parents were "surprisingly calm" about the incident after Henner told them on the phone what had happened, he said.**

"She's (mom) taken credit for this with all the prayers she says," said Henner, who joined the Marines after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001.

**"It makes me mad that people don't remember that anymore," he said. "That was a big recruiting drive for the U.S. military."**

As a combat photographer and two-time Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, Henner has snapped thousands of photos of Marines, U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi security forces conducting security operations in Al Anbar province. He's spent countless hours "outside the wire" with U.S. and Iraqi military forces, documenting the war through photos.

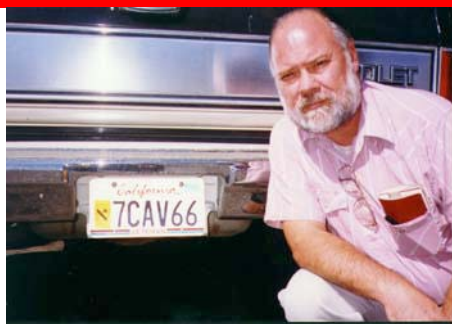
Still, this was the first firefight he's been in and the incident has made him a bit more aware to his surroundings, he said,

**"I carry a lot more (rifle) magazines now," he said.**

**With less than six months left in the Marine Corps, Henner plans on leaving the military to pursue college, he said.**



# VETERANS of FOREIGN WARS



**VFW Commander  
Dennis Blessing  
Post 1981  
200 South G Street  
Madera Ca 93639  
(559) 661-9038**

Chapter 106 Fresno of the Military Order of the Purple Heart dedicated a Monument in Fresno August 7th in the Court House Park. The unveiling of the monument was attended by Congressmen Jim Costa and George Radanovich, Fresno Supervisor Henry Perea, Fresno Mayor Alan Autry. Guest Speaker was Secretary of California Department of Veterans Affairs Tom Johnson, Color Guard was our own VFW Post 8900. Master of Ceremonies was Major General Ron Markarian.

The ceremony came off great and was covered by every TV station in Fresno. Also present providing musical selections was the 509 Military Band.

The top of the Monument has the following words inscribed;

**“Dedicated to the recipients of the nations oldest military decoration ‘The Purple Heart’.”**

Then

**“My stone is red for the blood they shed. The medal I bear is my country’s way to show they care. If I could be seen by all mankind maybe peace will come in my lifetime”.**

## OBLIGATION

In the presence of Almighty God, I do, of my own free will and accord, solemnly promise and declare that:

I will bear true allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America and I will always be loyal thereto.

I do further solemnly promise and declare that I will comply with the Congressional Charter, bylaws and Ritual of this order and I will always be loyal thereto. I will never wrong or defraud this organization—nor a member thereof nor permit any wrong to be done to either if in my power to prevent it.

I will never propose for membership any person not eligible nor one whom I know to be unworthy.

I will never make known to anyone not authorized to receive it any of the work of this order.

Should my affiliation with the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States cease in any way I will consider this pledge as binding outside of the order as though I had remained a member of same.

All this I promise and pledge upon the honor of a true comrade and a citizen of our great republic.

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

I have investigated the character and campaign medal service of the applicant and hereby endorse him/her as eligible and worthy of membership in the VFW.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Member of Post # \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATION

Admission Fee paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Dues paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ LM Fee paid \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(See Sec. 104 bylaws)

The Investigating Committee has performed its duties and recommends ☐ approval ☐ rejection.

(Signatures of Committee below)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Member

Applicant approved \_\_\_\_\_ Obligated \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

The annual dues of each member includes a year's subscription to the VFW Magazine, official publication of the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States. Each applicant, upon acceptance, will be so notified and furnished with an official dues receipt showing membership for the year for which dues or Life Membership fees have been paid.



## LIFE MEMBERSHIP FEES

Attained Age	Fee
Through 30	.....\$245
31-40	.....235
41-50	.....215
51-60	.....195
61-70	.....165
71-80	.....125
81+	.....85

Any applicant whose 31st, 41st, 51st, 61st, 71st or 81st birthday will occur after the date of application and on or before December 31st of the current calendar year, shall pay only the fee that would be required on his next birthday.

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SERVING MADERA COUNTY VETERANS



## News You Can Use

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

VA Regional Office, Oakland

1-800-827-1000

VA Life Insurance Center

1-800-669-8477

VA Medical Center Toll Free (Fresno)

1-888-826-2838

Cal-Vet Home Loan Information, (Fresno)

559-440-5132

Patient Advocate (Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 6970

Telephone Advice Nurse (Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 6933

Outpatient Clinic – Merced/Atwater (Castle)

209-381-0105

Service Representative: (DAV, Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 5642

Service Representative: (VFW, Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 5647

Service Representative: (AMVETS, Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 5816

Service Representative: (American Legion,  
Fresno VA)\*\*

Ext. 5648

\*\*Fresno VA Pharmacy, (to order 14 days before  
you run out call by touch tone phone)\*\*

559-225-6100 Ext. 5333

CVSO Madera County (pager) D. Blessing

559-661-6895

Fresno Vet Center (Fresno)

559-487-5660

Transportation to VA Medical appointments

\*\* Call VA Fresno toll free number first

1-888-826-2838 ext. 6424